



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Robert F. McDonnell
Governor

April 18, 2012

The Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Dear Secretary Mabus:

On behalf of the citizens of the Commonwealth, I extend profound gratitude to the Department of the Navy and Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana personnel for their demonstrated excellence and professionalism in responding to the April 6th F/A-18D crash in Virginia Beach. The pilots of the aircraft are especially to be commended for their heroic efforts in avoiding more populated areas and schools in guiding the crippled aircraft to the ground and for waiting to the last possible second to eject from the aircraft. They demonstrated exceptional skill and bravery. Their actions reflect great credit on both the United States Navy and all of America's sons and daughters serving in the United States military. As a nation, we are thankful for all of our men and women in uniform for their many sacrifices in the service of their fellow citizens as was exhibited so magnificently by all the military personnel responding to the scene of the crash.

The patriotic men and women who serve in the Navy in Hampton Roads are our fellow citizens of the Commonwealth. All Virginians are grateful for the important service rendered to the Commonwealth and to the nation by NAS Oceana. Since 1943, many of our country's most elite pilots and leaders have been trained at NAS Oceana, reflecting the Navy's commitment to the best training possible.

The Commonwealth and the City of Virginia Beach will continue to welcome the Navy as a good neighbor by actively addressing and controlling encroachment issues at NAS Oceana. The Commonwealth also remains committed to assisting the City of Virginia Beach in removing structures from the Accident Prevention Zone located adjacent to NAS Oceana.

The Honorable Ray Mabus
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On behalf of all Virginians, I look forward to continuing and strengthening the rewarding partnership between the Commonwealth, the City of Virginia Beach, and the naval aviation community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Robert F. McDonnell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "M".

Robert F. McDonnell

RFM/jwh